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ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE

RANDOLPH COUNTY BIBLE SOCIETY

AT ITS

ANNIVERSARY,

MAY 1st, 1853.

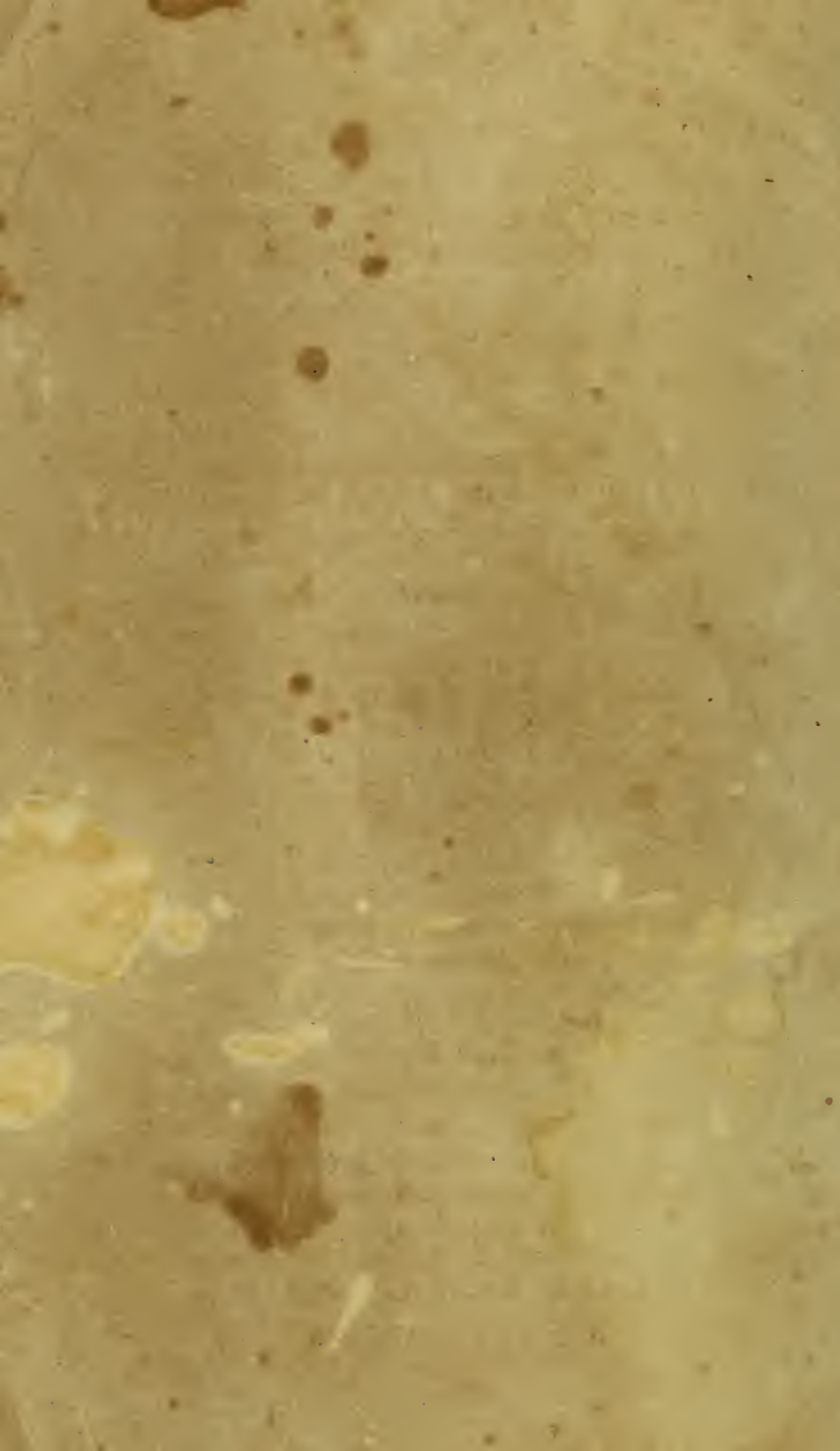
BY PROF. ROBBINS.

*Published at the request of the Society; and re-published in  
pamphlet form by the students of Normal College.*

GREENSBOROUGH.

PRINTED AT THE PATRIOT OFFICE.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

ASHEBOROUGH, May 2nd, 1853.

DEAR SIR: At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Randolph County Bible Society this morning, it was unanimously resolved, "that the Secretary write to Prof. Robbins requesting a copy of his Address, delivered yesterday, for publication."

Permit me to add my personal solicitations to those of the Committee. We hope you will comply with our request, and that the publication of the Address will aid in promoting the good cause we all have so much at heart.

Very respectfully,  
 PROF. ROBBINS. GEO. MCNEILL, Sec'y.

NORMAL COLLEGE, May 10th, 1853.

MR. MCNEILL: *Dear Sir:* Your communication, containing the request of the Ex. Com. of the R. C. Bible Society, has been received. I am obliged to the Committee for the compliment thus paid me.

The dictates of prudence would perhaps forbid my compliance with that request, and induce me to withhold a production prepared with so much haste and under so many disadvantages amid the pressure of other duties. But I waive my own opinion in deference to that of the Committee, and forward with this note a copy of the Address, to be disposed of as they think best.

With considerations of personal respect and esteem,  
 I am yours etc., W. MACK. ROBBINS.  
 REV. GEO. MCNEILL.



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## ADDRESS,

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*Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,  
of the Randolph County Bible Society :*

It affords me no small degree of gratification to reflect that in this almost my first effort in public speaking, good fortune has allotted me so noble a subject as that of the Bible and the Bible Cause. To have been honored with an invitation to address you, on any subject whatever, would have been considered on my part as a high compliment ; but to be selected as the advocate of this cause, I cannot but regard as a peculiar favor. So much of happiness or misery in the destiny of Man depends, in my judgment upon the promulgation of the Word of God throughout the world, that I rejoice in the opportunity of adding my humble efforts to those that are being made, by our Bible Societies, for that purpose. It is true that this is a cause of such magnitude, that I should have been deterred from occupying the position I do this day, as its advocate, by a fear lest the feebleness of my advocacy might prejudice rather than promote it, had I not also felt that the intrinsic merits of the subject are so palpable that whatever failure might be made in representing them in an impressive light, the fault would be attributed to the advocate and not to the cause itself. To do it justice I cannot hope. The highest powers of human eloquence might find a worthy theme in urging the responsibility that rests upon us, as a civilized and Christian people, of using every effort to dispense the Word of God to all men. But I may succeed in directing your attention, for a short time, more closely to this subject ; and should I, in this manner, or more immediately by anything I

may say, induce any one of you to feel a deeper interest in it, and to take a more decided stand in its favor, and, by that means, the Sacred Pages should be unfolded to a single son of Adam's hapless race, who would not otherwise have seen them, my reward will be ample.

If there is any sentiment in the human heart more noble than all the rest,—any one that goes further than all the rest to assimilate Man to the Deity, setting aside reverence and love to God himself, that sentiment is Philanthropy. There is so much that is displeasing and hateful to the upright and honest heart, in the principles and conduct of the larger portion of the human family, that nothing is more natural nor more easy than to imbibe an aversion and even a deep, dark hatred for Man in general. So much the more noble and divine, then, is that feeling in the bosom of the philanthropist, that prompts him, in looking at the gloomy picture of human nature, to dwell with pleasure in those brighter tints which serve, in some degree at least, to relieve the darker shades, and moves him, while he condemns the folly and wickedness of our race, to drop a tear of pity, too, over its misfortunes and its miseries. There is surely no finer field for the exercise of this exalted virtue, and no better opportunity for rendering it practically operative in the amelioration of Man's condition, than is afforded by the cause in which the American Bible Society and its auxiliaries are engaged. Save the gift of His only Son to die for our salvation, and of the Holy Ghost to apply that salvation to our hearts, Heaven's best gift to our race is the Bible. As God looked down upon the helpless state of Man, groping his way in impenetrable darkness, Mercy rejoiced when the glorious light of Revelation was handed down as a lamp to guide his wandering steps. And yet, lamentable to tell, millions of our fellow-men are still without that heavenly boon. Would not Mercy's face be lighted up with a still more pleasing smile, could that great gift of God be made, through our instrumentality, a common blessing to every individual of the human family? And might not we, as the instruments, be allowed to receive into our own

hearts a portion of the light of that gracious smile? But should we be so lost to every feeling of humanity as to neglect the exertion of all our abilities to promote this object, how can we expect to escape the frowns of indignant Heaven, justly due to our selfishness and our ingratitude?

In order to arrive at a just appreciation of the vast importance of this subject, let us turn a slight glance at the present condition of man. And first as regards his ignorance. It is computed that there are at least eight hundred millions of inhabitants on the globe. Of these, Europe and America contain perhaps three hundred millions; Africa, Asia, and the Islands adjacent, the remaining five hundred millions. Without particularizing to an unnecessary degree, and yet preserving sufficient accuracy for our purpose, we may consider the bulk of the former as in a civilized state. The great body of the latter must be regarded as uncivilized and occupying various grades of barbarism. A very large portion of them, however, are in a condition the most abject and savage. It is difficult to conceive the human mind so dark and so destitute of correct knowledge as it is found by observation to be among the people of those countries. Their information concerning the most common matters is exceedingly limited. Their knowledge of the arts of life is almost nothing. There are some marks of inventive genius among them, it is true; but the means they use to procure subsistence, and supply the other wants of nature, are in general, far less adapted to the intended end than those employed by the beasts that roam the deserts or lurk in the jungles around them. As for the comforts of life, and its conveniences, they know nothing, for the most part, concerning them. A slight exception to this remark may perhaps exist in the case of the Chinese, who seem to have advanced a step on the way to civilization. But it is only a step. Nothing but impending famine, on account of the denseness of population, seems to have driven them thus far. And they appear now to be stationary. Ages have elapsed since they occupied very nearly their present position; and there is no prospect that, without some external impulse, they

would ever make any considerable advancements beyond it. But degraded as her condition is, by far the larger portion of Africa and Asia will bear no comparison with China. We may perhaps be able to form a more correct estimate of the state of knowledge among the heathen by viewing for a moment its deficiency among ourselves. We doubtless live in the most enlightened nation that exists or ever has existed upon the face of the earth, taking all classes of population together. Learning has been assiduously cultivated among us ever since our birth as an independent nation, and for a considerable time before that period, among our ancestors on the other side of the water. And yet what an astonishing amount of ignorance still remains among a large majority of our population in regard to almost every part of Human, as well as Divine, knowledge. Take for example the science of Astronomy,—a science, which men in a low state of civilization have always cultivated perhaps to as great an extent as any other ; because the principal objects about which it discourses are ever present and open to the eye. Relate some of the more common and well-known facts of this science, such for instance as the revolution of the Earth on its axis, or of the planets round the Sun ; and among a majority of individuals are you comprehended, or do you gain credence ? Do you not rather expose yourself to derision, and are not your hearers ready to exclaim, as Festus did to Paul, “Thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad?” But leave the sciences, and come down to common affairs. Consider the slowness with which improvements are made and the vast amount of labor it requires to convince the masses of our people of the utility of enterprises which all observation has proved to be well calculated to promote individual as well as national prosperity. Look at the great backwardness with which large classes of the community adopt and apply useful inventions, and the extreme propensity to adhere to old and absurd customs, in spite of demonstration that such a course is suicidal and pernicious ; all which things proceed from a deficiency in correct and liberal knowledge ; and you will be able to form some idea of the

amount of ignorance that still exists among us. Consider then that the most learned do not outstrip the most ignorant classes in our own country, more than these excel even the best informed of the inhabitants of uncivilized nations, and some faint notion may be gained of the amazing and pitiable darkness that broods over their minds. Recollecting that we have taken as an illustration the most enlightened people on the globe, and that the great masses even of other civilized nations are far from coming up to this standard, while those of barbarous countries, which comprise much the larger portion of the human family, fall so infinitely far below it, truly the condition of man, as regards knowledge, appears deplorable. And yet we view the state of the heathen at a distance, and the worst of their condition does not appear. For distance hides deformity and softens the rugged aspect of all evils. Could we but draw near and view these things as they really exist ; could we but see the depths of darkness into which millions of glorious and immortal minds are sunk ; if there be the smallest degree of pity or of sympathy remaining in our hearts, they would bleed at the spectacle.

As ignorance drowns the nobler, and developes the baser portions of human character ; as it fosters impiety by removing the restraints which a knowledge of God imposes ; as it rivets the yoke of the oppressor, and is the parent of wretchedness ; so we find men debased to the lowest degree, we find them daringly wicked, ground to the dust by tyranny, and almost completely miserable. As a specimen of the baseness and degradation of heathen nations consider only one of their practices, that of Cannibalism. Nothing can be more repugnant and disgusting to a civilized man than even to think of such a custom ; so much so that we should be disposed, for the credit of human nature, to deny its existence altogether, were we not furnished with convincing evidence that, in some parts of the world, it is by no means uncommon. Other things almost equally degrading are universally practiced among savage nations. Common decency and cleanliness are entirely disregarded. So debased indeed are the inhabitants of many

of those nations, that their food, habitations, and everything they use, seem to please them more in proportion as they possess less of those qualifications.

Man is enslaved to his fellow-man. This is the case to a large extent at present even among civilized nations. Great Britain and the United States are the only nations that enjoy much genuine freedom. A few years ago the voice of liberty was heard calling her sons to the rescue all over America. The prospects of our sister nations on this continent were cheering for a while. But alas ! now the friends of true Freedom may weep to see that she "has a name to live and is dead." The lifeless form of Republicanism is left, it is true ; but the spirit that should animate it, is gone. One or two years only have elapsed since Europe arose with a mighty struggle and seemed about to shake herself from the dust. But despots have triumphed. Sad as it is to relate, the foot of tyranny is again upon the necks of the people. No voice is raised in behalf of right and justice but it is quickly stifled by the hand of the executioner. Like some horrid demon, Monarchy stands watching with grim satisfaction the Goddess of Liberty as she lies bleeding at his feet ; and at every faint gasp or motion he plunges his accursed dagger afresh into her mangled bosom. Thank God ! she is immortal ! And, though down-trodden now, she shall yet arise and cheer the weeping nations with her smile ! For the present, however, all is dark. Execution succeeds execution. Murder follow murder. And all over continental Europe a period seems hastening on when those words of the Roman poet, used in his description of the Iron Age, will again be applicable ;—

" *Virgo cæde madentes  
Ultima cœlestum terras Astræa reliquit.*"

But however woeful the slavery of civilized Europe may be, it is far from being like that of the nations of Africa and Asia. There is more struggle, there is a keener sense of wrong and a deeper spirit of indignation and resentment among the people of Europe. But though less felt and less complained of, African and Asiatic tyranny is far more de-

grading and far more effectual in extinguishing every noble and generous impulse of the human heart. Spiritual and civil despotism grinds them to the dust. Go to the abject minions of the Turkish and Persian despots;—go to the palace of the Ethiopian monarch with its pavements formed from the skulls of his wretched victims; and learn there the full meaning of the word Oppression,—the more dreadful from the fact that its objects have ceased to struggle and resist, and have long been calmly sunk in the silence of despair.

So great have been the misfortunes, and so glaring and dreadful the wrongs of Man, that I would gladly pass by that portion of the picture which exhibits his sins and his wickedness. But the subject demands at least some notice; for there is no characteristic in Man's condition that stands out to our view with more prominence than this. The words of Inspiration, spoken ages ago, are lamentably true still, "That the wickedness of man is great." So defective is his knowledge of God, and so great the perverseness of his heart, that the most daring impiety is substituted for a proper worship and adoration of his Maker, in the superstitious hope of gaining His favor by doing those things which He most of all hates and forbids. That Omnipotent Being who has forbidden murder is worshiped by the most inhuman and unnatural of all murders, that of the infant by the hand of its mother. With the same view of pleasing God, thousands are crushed to death under the rolling car of an Idol, and many a living female victim offers herself a sacrifice in the funeral flames of her spouse. In uncivilized countries, theft, robbery, injustice, and cruelty stalk abroad unrestrained. The voice of Human, and the thunders of Divine, Law are equally unheard. But why need I attempt to describe that which the eye of Jehovah alone can fully see, and the words of Inspiration alone delineate? Mercy, as well as Justice is infinite; or "the vials of the wrath of God" would ere this have been poured out, and blotted our race from existence forever.

From what has been said, surely no one will be disposed to doubt that Man is miserable. Wretchedness is the legitimate

offspring of vice and sin. One sin "brought Death into the world, and all our woe." Misery is the necessary effect of disobedience, and all unhappiness is traceable to that. Where the cause is so predominant we would naturally look for much of the effect. And do not experience and observation verify it? Turn to your neighbor and ask him if he is happy. You need not ask. The lines of care and sorrow are already on his brow. Ask the cheerful-faced youth if he is happy. Ask the fair damsel as she trips so lightly along. These look happy, and they will perhaps say Yes! But gnawing discontent, and a secret, unsatisfied longing for something yet unpossessed, will answer more truly in their hearts, No! Go ask the down-trodden slave, as the yoke of the oppressor bows him to the earth, if he is happy. Ask the proud oppressor, too, if there is peace in his heart. Inquire of the man of wealth, if his treasures bring content. Ask of the toil-worn laborer, as evening brings him back weary and exhausted to his home, and he sinks down hungry and forlorn, while his children cry around him for the bread he has not to give, if he is happy. Nay, rather, insult not his bursting heart with such a question. Go, ask of the heathen mother, as she stands upon the banks of the Ganges and watches with tearful eye while the flood devours her babe, if she has obtained the happiness she sought. Go, ask of the prisoner in his cell if there is music in the clanking of his chains. Ask of the weeping exile, as he mourns for his native land,

"And sighs for the friends who can meet him no more;"

if he is blest. Alas! the result of every inquiry will but convince us more fully of the truth of what the Scottish poet has so touchingly sung,—“Man was made to mourn.” Well might we exclaim with the prophet of God, “Oh! that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears!” that I might weep over the miseries of Man! Who that has a heart to feel can contemplate the wretchedness and woes of the human race, which I have so feebly attempted to describe, without a tear of commiseration and an ardent desire to find if possible, some means to remove or alleviate them? Man’s

condition calls loudly for remedy. An appeal is made to every noble and humane sentiment in our breasts to use the utmost efforts in our power to provide one. Thank God! there is a sovereign remedy,—one which is fully able to eradicate all the diseases, and bind up all the wounds of the human heart. And while the power to give it efficacy belongs to God alone, it is both our privilege and duty to co-operate with Him in the great work of its dispensation. That remedy is the Bible. This, too, is the only remedy, and the one around which cluster all the hopes of Man. It was commissioned from Heaven to guide him into all truth and lead him to the fountain of life. It shall ultimately accomplish its object. Through its mighty influence, as the instrument in the hands of God, Man shall yet be raised from his low estate and “renewed after the image of Him that created him.” This is indeed a vast—a mighty work, and wonderful must be the instrument that is able to effect it. The greatness of the end naturally awakens our interest in regard to the means. In order then to satisfy, in some degree, the interest we feel, and to understand more clearly the adaptation of the Bible to the great object it proposes to accomplish, let us for a while examine its contents, and weigh, as well as we are able, its merits.

Suppose the Bible suddenly taken from the world. Suppose we should look upon our tables where it was accustomed to lie, and its place was vacant. Would we not feel that we had lost the dearest and truest of all earthly friends? Would we not often speak of its excellencies, then? Would we not wonder at the recollection of its strange, sublime, and glorious teachings, and be astonished that we never revered nor loved it more? Would not our libraries look empty and the world seem almost without a book? But familiarity detracts strangely from our estimate of all things. We see the Bible lying on our desks and tables; everywhere we turn it meets our eyes; until we almost forget its worth, and though I trust we all love and venerate it much, yet few of us, I fear, appreciate its real value. It is said of Sir Walter Scott, that in his last hours he requested his friend Lockhart to read to him. Being

asked what book he would hear read, he turned his dying eyes upon his friend and replied, with a look of earnestness and honesty that could never be forgotten, "Lockhart, there is but one Book!"

The Bible is a wonderful book, whether considered in reference to its origin, its contents, or its effects. Look at its origin. It was not the production of one man nor of one age, nor was it even written in the same language. Time was in his youth when its earliest portions were penned; and he shook his hoary locks over the ruins of falling empires ere it was finished. At length the final touch was given and the noble structure stood forth complete. Different workmen had prepared the materials for the building, without any concert of action. Various artists and architects had wrought the separate parts without any comparison with each other. Yet when all are brought together every part fits without difficulty. There is no incongruity. There is no need for filling up in one place, nor hewing off in another. Like the temple of God built by Solomon "neither hammer nor axe was heard" in its erection. And yet all is proportion,—all is perfect harmony.

Consider the contents of the Bible. As a book of History it is incomparable to any other in antiquity, in authenticity, and interest. Nothing is more natural to man, when he surveys himself and the objects around him, than to inquire, "Whence came I? And whence did this vast frame of the Universe originate?" But there is no subject which could possibly be involved in more hopeless darkness, were not the mystery explained and solved by the Word of God. With this, however, all is clear. With the most remarkable brevity, the Creation, the Fall, and all the interesting and startling incidents, connected with the early history of our race, are disclosed. So concise and pointed is the narration, it is like saying, "Let there be light; and there is light." Other histories begin in fable, and like lamps glimmering over a small space, serve but to render the surrounding darkness more visible. Not so the Bible. Like Balboa standing on the cliffs

of the Isthmus and gazing for the first time on the mighty Pacific expanding its wide waste of waters half round the globe; so the Sacred Historian, raised up on a lofty stand-point, viewed all of Time gone by, and even gazed out a short distance upon the great sea of Eternity Past, and proudly inscribes the top of his first page with those words, "In the beginning." The sublimity of this first sentence is but a shadow of the whole. Transcendent superiority characterizes every stroke of the Divine pencil. Whether the subject is a nation or an individual, a Master's hand is visible. Where can a more complete and perfect civil history be found than is contained in the Books of Kings and Chronicles? Also in Biography, that very interesting as well as very difficult species of history, how infinitely does the Bible excel all other books!! The stories of Job, of Abraham, of Joseph, of David and many others,—how rich in instruction,—how inimitable in execution! The incidents of very long lives are assorted in the happiest manner and but a few of the more striking are given; and yet those characters, after a single perusal, are engraven upon the mind, and we have the most accurate ideas not only of their leading traits, but even of the nicer peculiarities which distinguished them. And how inflexible is the impartiality of these accounts. What merely Human artist, in painting such favorite characters as Abraham and David, would have disfigured the portraits by any mention of their sins? Or if they must have been mentioned, would not have defended or excused them? But the Sacred Pensman not only depicts the virtues but also the vices of his characters; nor does he attempt to conceal the one nor to magnify the other. Here is the place to study Human Nature. Other histories so cover their portraits of character with the gloss and coloring of the writer's fancy that our minds are imposed upon. The Bible alone gives us faithful likenesses. A child may learn lessons of wisdom and philosophy from them.

The Poetry of the Bible is unrivalled. The sweetest notes that ever echoed from the lyre of Orpheus, even when the animals and trees gathered round to listen, were inferior to

those which flowed so solemnly and majestically, and yet so tenderly from the harp of David. Theocritus and Virgil have enraptured us with their Idyls and Eclogues so natural and true to the manners of pastoral life. But to my mind their excellencies are tame compared with the gorgeous richness of the Song of Solomon. In reading it we seem transported to some magic scene of spicy groves and limpid streams where every sight is luxuriant beauty, where every sound is melody, and every breath is love. The poet Gray has probably produced as fine a specimen of elegiac poetry as can be found in any language out of the Bible; a poem which will render him immortal as long as the English language is read or remembered; a poem so remarkable for its power of inspiration that the hero, Wolfe, when he first read it, as he was sailing down the St. Lawrence to make the ascent of the heights of Abraham and the attack upon Quebec, is said to have remarked to his officers that he would rather be the author of it than to take that city. And yet there are many passages in the Bible, and among others the dirge of David upon the death of Saul and Jonathan, which, read in the grand Original Tongue, would no doubt far excel it. But the book of Psalms is the poetic glory of the Bible. Here is found every species of poetry, from the awfully sublime to the softest and most tender. The Psalmist, in his evening meditations, as he forgot himself in contemplating the glories of Nature, and watching "the moon and stars which God had ordained," as they rose above the vine-clad hills east of Jerusalem, seems sometimes to have snatched for his harp a note from the choir of Heaven, or an echo from the "music of the spheres." Again he recounts the wonderful incidents of his people's story, and bursts forth into the loftiest anthems of praise to the God of Israel. Then Patriotism sweeps the lyre, and we hear the captive sons of Judea lamenting: "By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof." "If I forget thee oh! Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my

tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth!" How sublime and magnificent also is that description of the appearance of Jehovah, so often quoted as an instance of noble composition; "He bowed the heavens, also, and came down, and darkness was under His feet; and he rode upon a cherub and did fly; yea, He did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness His secret place; His pavilion round about Him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies!"

As a Book of Eloquence, the Bible is far superior to any other. It is said that that great orator, Charles Fox, remarked of himself, that he had learned more of true eloquence from the Book of Job than from all other books together; and whatever attainments he might have made in that noble art he attributed them in a large degree to a diligent and constant study of that Book.—For flowing diction, united with the loftiest sublimity and majesty of thought, rushing upon the soul like a flood-tide of inspiration, the writings of Isaiah are inimitable. But I need not specify. From lid to lid of the Bible, whether we seek among the melodies of David, or the wise sayings of Solomon; whether among the grand thoughts of Job, the gorgeous imagery of Isaiah, the dark mysteries of Ezekiel; whether we listen to Paul as he stands "ready to be offered," or to the glorious words of the Saviour on the Mount; if Eloquence be the simple and forcible expression of thought, warmed by the noble and impassioned feelings of the heart, all is Eloquence, and such Eloquence as can nowhere else be found.

The Bible is remarkable as a Book of Law; not only because it contains the best system of Laws extant, but because it contains the only foundation upon which any rational and just system of Law can be grounded. Law is based upon the relations subsisting between different beings. For Law is the exposition of right and duty; and these depend upon relation. Without a knowledge, then, of the relations subsisting, and the consequent rights and duties, it would be impossible to frame any rational system of Law, either Civil or Moral, for any created being. The Bible is the only book that can give us

a correct knowledge of God, as our Creator and Father, and of the relations of brotherhood and equality that exist between all men as His creatures and His children. The principles of Divine and Human Law are clearly founded in those relations. Right and justice are dependent upon them. Take away the Bible, then, and you not only take away all just and proper law; but the only light by which laws could be made that are suitable to the condition of Man, is removed. The Instinct of Self-preservation and others of a kindred nature may, it is true, as they have done, impel Man, who is a social being, to form communities and enact laws to answer his purposes in some degree. But we need only turn to the great examples of Antiquity to be convinced that Human wisdom is insufficient of itself to draw the nicer distinctions between guilt and innocence, and properly to graduate the scale of turpitude belonging to different crimes. The Law of the Bible, however, takes cognizance not only of the outward actions, but even of the deepest thoughts and intents of the heart. And how comprehensively and pointedly are the great principles of that Law expressed! The substance of all is contained in those wonderful tables handed down from Sinai, upon which the whole Bible is but a comment. Indeed to bring down those grand principles to the greatest brevity and yet the greatest plainness, their Omniscient Author has concentrated them all in one single word—Love. Who but Infinite Wisdom could thus have digested the various contents of the fullest and most comprehensive volume in the world into one word which fully embraces all?

Nothing, however, is more wonderful in reference to the Bible than the depth of its Philosophy. Lord Bacon, in his great work on the “Advancement of Learning” speaks of a “*Philosophia Prima*”—a universal Philosophy, from which all the separate sciences spring as the branches of a tree spring from the trunk, and which binds them all together in a common bond of brotherhood. May not the Bible be said to contain the principles of this universal Philosophy? It is the essence of Truth. Let the searcher after knowledge go where he may;

let him expand his comprehension to the greatest objects in the Universe, and examine into their laws; or let him descend to the minutest atom that lies invisible and hidden in his presence, and investigate its properties; everywhere he turns, he will find the Bible has been there before him. How true those words of the wise man, "There is nothing new under the sun." Did Newton discover the secret chain of gravitation which holds the revolving worlds in their places? Had not Job long ago darkly hinted at the "influences of The Pleiades and the bands of Orion?" This instance is but an illustration of what is true in every department of knowledge. Wander over every field of investigation, dive into the lowest depths of science, pry into the hidden world of the human heart; and everywhere the footsteps of the sacred Pioneer are seen. Every advance we make will but convince us more fully that the Spirit of Wisdom which inspired the wondrous pages of the Bible, saw with his penetrating eye every link of the great chain which binds together all "that was, and is, and is to come;" and, thus at once knowing all things, inspired His Word with a view to Truth in all things. Truly the Bible is a wonderful volume. Well does it deserve the appellation of the Book of books. It came from the hands of the God of all wisdom and power and truth; and it bears the impress of its author.

After all that has been said of the Bible, none can be surprised that it is a book of boundless influence and power over the heart of the attentive and honest reader. Its wisdom must enlighten, its purity must sanctify, its lofty and sublime teachings must exalt and ennoble the mind of Man. It is exactly fitted to counteract the baseness of Human Nature. The foundation of all improvement in the principles and practice of men lies in self-respect. Implant this, and you have regenerated the man. Take this away, and when temptation comes he will be as the brute. Nothing certainly is so well calculated to inspire this sentiment in the heart as the great doctrines of the Bible. What can be more apt to raise, in a proper manner, Man's opinion of himself than to teach him he

is immortal? For this glorious doctrine of Man's Immortality we are indebted to the Bible. There is indeed a spirit in Man that longs for it, and fond hope might even lead him to conjecture it. The ancients had some dim ideas concerning it, and so have the heathen of the present day. But without the Bible, nothing more than an obscure notion can be arrived at. And the real belief of all, destitute of the Bible's authority, is, at heart, as some one has expressed it; "Death is nothing, and nothing is after death." But the Bible reveals the truth, and how salutary is the influence of that truth upon the heart! How cheering and ennobling to the soul! Some quiet Sabbath eve when, above all other times on earth,

"There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,"

who has not stolen away, with no companion but his Bible, to the still grove, and there, seated on some fallen trunk or reclining at the foot of some aged oak, spread the sacred volume before him and pored over its glorious lessons, until he seemed almost transported to a happier clime? And then while twilight was casting her dewy mantle over the landscape, as he laid aside the Holy Book and conversed with nature around him and with his own heart; as he gazed far into the blue depths of the evening sky, while its gems were gathering thicker every moment; and finally as night's sable curtain overspread all, and upon the hushed and silent air, it seemed as if spirits from other worlds were hovering; who has not then felt the inward struggles of his soul, knocking at its prison-bars and exulting in its Immortality? Who has not then gloried in the name of Man? Who has not then breathed a heart-felt expression of gratitude to God for the glorious gift of his being? And if perchance, in that consecrated hour, a thought unworthy has intruded into his mind, how has he scorned it and turned from it to contemplate, with rapture and delight, the pure, the holy and the good!

And how well are the sublime doctrines of the Bible suited to strengthen and encourage the heart in its aspirations after purity and goodness, and in its efforts to pursue a course of rectitude amid the conflicts of this world. To Weakness, they

give power. To Fearfulness, they give courage. To Fickleness, they give stability. To Affliction, they give fortitude. Let the hand of Misfortune be upon us, and the clouds of Adversity gloom our heavens. Difficulties lie in the way, discouragements assail us, perhaps friends desert and loved ones deceive us. The world is dark, and not a ray of light pierces the darkness to guide us along our pathway. Inspired by the consoling promises of the Sacred Word, who, at such a time, has not felt the infant godstirring in his heart, and surveyed the waste around him with a smile of conscious greatness and a lofty sense of superiority? Oh! the concentrated joy of such an hour!—And whence does it come? From the Book of books. Take it from us, and we are shorn of our strength. When sorrow comes we faint. Assailed by temptation, we are disheartened. The spirit that made us omnipotent is gone; and, without an effort, we forsake the field and give up the conflict.

Whatever is beneficial to every individual must also be beneficial to Society as a whole; for the health of the body is insured by the health of all the members. The Bible not only brings its blessings to Man as an individual, but as a component part of the Social Union, that must exist wherever Man exists. It comes to those who rule, with precepts of wisdom and moderation, and teaches them that power is not given them for self-aggrandizement, but for the welfare of all. It comes to those who serve and takes away the humiliation of their position by teaching them that rulers are the vice-gerents of God, and clothed with His and not their own authority. It comes to every class with lessons of peculiar duty and precepts of sobriety and virtue; and these are the great pillars upon which the safety and happiness of Human Society are sustained.

But for no portion of our race does the Bible do more than for Woman. Look at her condition in heathen lands, down-trodden and degraded, and compare it with the station of power and influence she occupies in civilized and christian nations. Her weakness invites oppression where Man is not actuated by

high and holy principles. Implant proper sentiments in his heart, and her very dependence upon him gives him courage in her defence and nerves his arm with ten-fold vigor when battling in her cause. The Bible inspires these sentiments. It teaches Man, as some one has elegantly said, "that the portion of his body from which she was first formed was not taken from his feet, that he might trample upon her ; nor from his head, that she might rule over him ; but from his side, that she might be his equal ; from under his arm, that he might shield and protect her ; and from near his heart, that he might cherish and love her." Wherever the Bible has gone, there and there only, Woman occupies a worthy sphere and receives the respect and honor due to her virtues and her sex. Gentle maiden ! the admired of every circle,—the beloved of all that know thee ;—thou whose cheek shames the rose and before the whiteness of whose brow the lily blushes ;—thou jewel of thy father's crown and pride of a fond mother's heart ;—revere the Bible ! Press it to thy bosom, and thank Heaven for such an advocate to plead thy cause, and such a deliverer to break the chain of thy slavery.

National liberty and prosperity, also, follow in the train of the Bible. If other ages might have doubted this, the blindest unbeliever must be convinced at the present day. There is a living example of it which stands up with prominence before our eyes. Behold the might, the progress, and the glory of the Anglo-Saxon race. I need but mention it. Look to the east, and the broad banner of glorious Old England, at the mention of whose name our hearts leap with pride, to think she is our mother-land, is mounted high aloft and overshadows all the rest. Turn to our own continent, and the sceptre of power and of greatness is in the hands of her descendant, the Republic of the world. What is the cause of this wonderful superiority of the Anglo-Saxon nations ? The question has but one answer. It is the Bible. Here almost alone the Word of God is revered. Here alone it exercises a very general influence. Here almost alone has pure and genuine Christianity shed her glory and her blessings in mod-

tern times. Under her genial nurture, civil and ecclesiastical freedom are brought to a high degree of perfection. Learning advances. The Arts flourish. Wealth increases. Commerce widens, and with it, power and dominion; until the World almost promises to become civilized and christianized by becoming Anglo-Saxon.

While, as patriots, we rejoice in this singular prosperity of our own people, as philanthropists and lovers of mankind, we should labor to extend the blessings we enjoy to the whole human race, and even to augment them among ourselves. The Bible is very far from exercising its full influence among us. There is an astonishingly large portion of our population still destitute of the Word of God. Here then in our very midst is a field open for efforts of benevolence through the means of the Bible Society. But the amount of this destitution in our own country, which is perhaps the best supplied of any, of course affords no specimen of how much the Bible wanting in other countries usually termed enlightened, much less in heathen lands. We can arrive, however, at a tolerably correct idea of Bible destitution by the consideration of one or two short and simple facts. It is computed that at the beginning of the present century there were not more than four million copies of the Word of God in existence throughout the world, which would furnish one copy to about every two hundred persons. Principally through the agency of Bible Societies, in this country and Great Britain, there have been issued, since that time, upwards of seventy million copies in nearly two hundred languages and dialects. Allowing all these to have been equally distributed there would be one Bible in the possession of every dozen persons on the globe. But of course they are not nor could have been equally distributed. Very many copies, also, must have been worn out and destroyed. Probably not many more than half of them are now in existence, and these are mostly confined to two or three countries. The opening, then, for the exertion of Christian Philanthropy in this direction is still almost boundless. The world calls for our aid.

In attending to this call, which comes to us resounding from the frozen regions of the Pole to the sunny tracts of the Equator, besides our sympathy for the condition, and our anxiety for the amelioration of mankind in heathen countries, there are other powerful motives which may well lead us to activity. We live in turbulent times. There is indeed at present no very startling outbreak in any part of the world. It requires but half an eye, however, to see that almost everywhere Human Society is a smouldering volcano. Elements are at work and fires are secretly augmenting, that shall ere long shake the nations as with an earthquake. Among other agencies that are operating with activity, a very conspicuous one is Popery. And all her efforts seem to be used in the promotion of evil. Superstition, persecution, cruelty are in her train. Under a mask she is working all manner of wickedness and heaping up a mountain of iniquity which already reaches well-nigh to heaven. She is the foe of all true Religion, and, like some insidious serpent, seems to be stealthily entwining her deadly coils around the heart of vital Christianity everywhere, as if designing at length to crush it at once by one mighty contraction. The Bible has no more mortal enemy, not even in Infidelity itself. Strange as this might seem, at the first view, the strangeness will disappear upon a slight examination of the principles on which she acts. Tyranny of every kind flourishes best in the dark. The light of liberal knowledge soon withers and destroys it. There can be no more complete nor heartless tyranny than that of Popery, at least in principle. If her practice falls short in any degree, it is because she lacks power. Once she exulted in a lordship over the civil as well as spiritual affairs of men. Driven almost entirely from the former position and weakened somewhat in the latter, she still clings with a tenacious grasp to all that is left her. She struggles too with wonderful energy and with some success to regain what she has lost both in ecclesiastical and political influence. The Bible is no friend either of temporal or spiritual oppression. It fills the soul with a disdain of human despotism by teaching every man that he is a god. It

shows the humble inquirer after the road to future bliss, that there is a more direct and sure path to Heaven than through the mediation of any one like himself. It bids him come himself directly to the well of salvation and "take of the waters of life freely." Hence the priest trembles at the general diffusion of the Word of God. Like the silversmith of Ephesus he fears there is "danger that his craft will be set at nought." No wonder then that the most brilliant bonfires at Rome are those in which the Bible is committed to the flames. But a short time since a vessel from this country, at anchor in a Catholic port, was searched and every copy of the Sacred Volume found on board was taken and destroyed. For the simple crime of reading the Bible for themselves some persons have, until very recently, been imprisoned in the dungeons of the Tuscan monarch who is the tool of the Pope in this matter; and on being released lately the mind of one of them was found to be irrecoverably impaired by the intensity of his sufferings under the cruel treatment he received during confinement. A few years ago the Sandwich Islands were almost completely christianized, and a lovelier or happier country existed not on earth. A French force attempted to land there for the purpose of forming a friendly station, as they pretended, but really with a view to facilitate the introduction of Catholic priests, and to carry out the almost equally pernicious design of selling ardent spirits to the natives. Being prohibited from doing so, they sought a quarrel with the Islanders, finally effected a landing, drove the queen from her throne, and expelled the missionaries. This was done through the machinations of Popery. These instances I have mentioned are but faint specimens of her dark deeds. When the history of them all shall be fully written out and exposed to the gaze of angels and of men, the annals of time will afford no rival to their blackness. Does it not become Protestantism to meet these iniquitous efforts, on the part of Popery, to obtain influence and supremacy, with a bold and united front? And the weapon with which we must contend is the Word of God. This is the "Sword of the Spirit" which shall smite

our foes. This is the bulwark of Protestant Christianity; and Protestant Christianity is the hope of Man. Let Popery gain the complete ascendancy, and experience proves that she will not stop at any cruelty nor hesitate any outrage to crush her opposers. There are now upon her records the decrees of councils, held a century or two ago, devoting to the flames every one who dares to read the Word of God for himself. The sentiments of mankind have made these enactments a dead letter. But only give Catholicism again control of the sentiments and dominion over the minds of men, as she once possessed it, and all the horrors of persecution will be revived, the Inquisition will again flourish, and the true Christian, who will not "worship the beast and his image," will be driven as of yore to seek a home "in the dens and caves of the earth."

As Americans we are doubly called upon to be zealous in this cause. If there be any country, upon which Popery has cast an evil eye, it is doubtless our own. Ours is the land where Human Freedom, expelled from almost every other spot on earth, has found a resting place for her weary foot. Her blessings have rendered us glorious and her smiles have made us happy. Here we have reared up a vast tower of Liberty for all the nations "to see to;" and upon the vertex of that tower we have planted the "stars and stripes" as a beacon light to cheer the hearts of sea-tossed mariners in search of freedom, and to guide them into port. The bosoms of tyrants burn with hatred against us; and Popery, their truest friend and firmest ally, is secretly plotting our destruction. Deep, dark, and insidious, the mine is being prepared and the train laid that is expected to rend us in pieces by its explosion. God grant that its fury may burst upon its wicked projectors and smite them into ruin in a moment. And such we trust will be the case. The hand of God has clearly been for us. His Sacred Word is still with us, our safe-guard and the palladium of our liberties. The oppressed of all nations have already "risen up and called us blessed." May we not hope that when the efforts of Popery to work our over-

throw shall become more fully know, all mankind will see her cloven foot, and with a mighty voice, united with the thunders of Jehovah Himself, pronounce upon her a curse that will wither and blast her forever?

Like all benevolent actions, there is a strong inducement to labor in the Bible cause on account of the beneficial effects produced upon those engaged in it. These effects are many, and I have not time now to enlarge upon them. I may but mention one,—that liberality of sentiment and sympathy of feeling generated among the various orthodox denominations of Christians by their united efforts is this cause. The heart of the great-souled man sickens and bleeds to see how much the progress of true Religion has been retarded by narrow-minded Bigotry. Divided by prejudice and tied to sets of forms and expression of their own, the different sects of Christians have regarded each other as enemies rather than as brothers; and the talent and intellect, which should have struggled gloriously in evangelising the world, has been wasted and worse than wasted in petty contests about trifles and things of only secondary importance. But the cause of the Bible is common ground on which all Protestants may stand. The Bible is a watch-word to which they may all respond. Here they may lay aside their little heart-burnings, and, with a feeling of enlarged charity, embrace each other as fellow-soldiers contending in a common cause and against a common enemy. Here they may learn to love one another, and to feel “how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.”

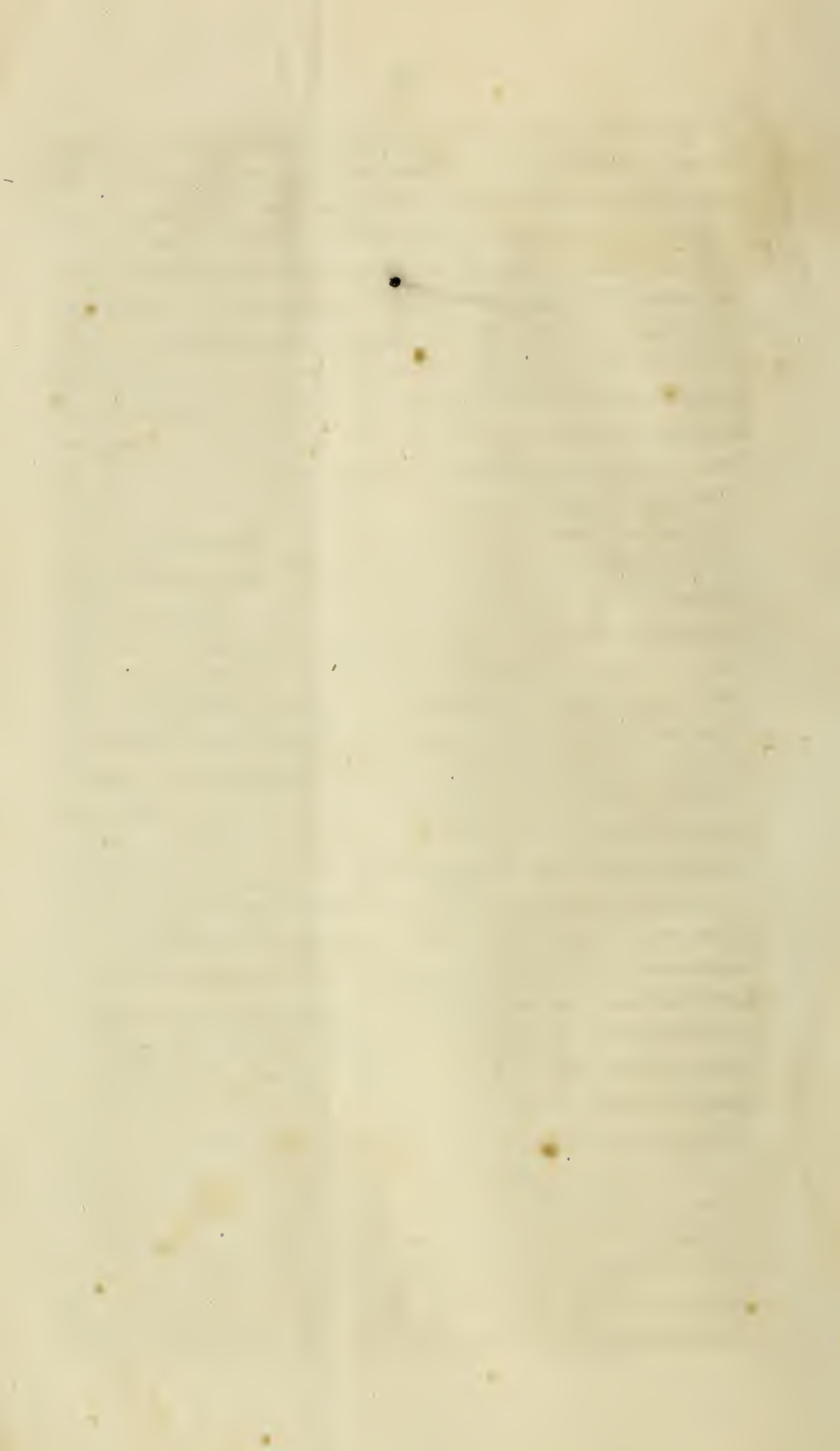
There is encouragement also to labor in this cause from a view of what has already been accomplished, and the assurance of final success. When the first efforts were made to circulate the Scriptures among the Heathen, many of their languages had to be reduced to grammatical order. Nearly one hundred and fifty have been thus reduced, and the Bible is now printed in them. Instead of four millions which existed half a century ago, there are now forty or fifty millions of Bibles in the world. The Missionary has taken the Holy Book in his hand and gone forth for the healing of the na-

tions. But a comparatively short time has elapsed since the first vessel of missionaries left our shores. Nations, almost, have been regenerated, and deserts made "to rejoice and blossom as the rose." And still the prospect brightens. There are difficulties and opposing influences to combat. But, in the words of the dying Wesley, "the best of all is God is with us." The time shall come, through the wise workings of His providence, (aye, has it not already come?) when the ears of all nations shall be open to the tidings of Christianity, and "the Isles shall wait for His law." And that better time we trust will come ere long, when the World shall not only hear but obey the glorious gospel of the Son of God; "when the leopard shall lie down with the kid," "and the lion shall eat straw like the ox." "Nation shall no more rise up against nation," "neither shall they learn war any more." "But the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

Who, then, will not aid in hastening on this glorious period? Who will not lend the hand of assistance to this noble cause? Young man! instead of wasting your means in extravagance and dissipation, cast it into the treasury of God. Lovely maiden! so mere a trifle as the ring upon your finger might save a Human soul. Without that link perhaps the chain will be incomplete which might otherwise have raised some heart now sunk in sin and shame, and bound it forever to the throne of God in Heaven. Christian mother! as you press your tender babe to your bosom, and rejoice in the possession of such a treasure, remember that without the Word of God you might have sacrificed it in the vain hope of thereby winning the approbation of your Maker. And will not you cast in your mite that others like you may be spared the pain and guilt of such an action? Aged man! your head white with the snows of many winters, and your form bowed by the weight of years! as you assemble your children and grand-children, night and morning, around the ancestral hearth, and spread before you the well-worn pages of the dear old Family Bible, and read its glorious promises, and exult as its blessed light unfolds to

your dimmed eye visions of Heaven and of Glory that lie just before you, remember that many an aged man like you, with hoary locks and trembling hands, is now tottering on the verge of the grave, and he has never seen that Book of Consolation. Perhaps his children, untaught in its principles of duty and obedience, have wrung his heart with anguish by their cruelty. Life to him has been one long day of sorrow. Now he is about to die and all is dark before him. No ray of hope gilds the sunset of his days. Will you not hasten and send him the Word of God, that it may guide him safely through the valley of Death, and you may greet him soon on the shores of the better land?

Come one! come all! and rejoice in the privilege and the honor of aiding the cause of the Bible. 'Tis the cause of Humanity. To do good is what we live for. No finer field for benevolence will ever be offered. In this field work, then, while it is day. The reward shall come. The time of the harvest hasteneth. To feel that we have wiped away the tear of sorrow from the cheek of a brother man, is no mean reward. To see that we have given him prosperity and happiness even in this life, can thrill the heart with joy. But to know that we have pointed him the path to endless felicity and given him a lamp to guide his feet to the portals of Heaven, would pour a stream of pure delight into the soul that angels might covet. If you wish this, aid in the Bible cause. The remembrance that you have done so will cheer you along life's wearisome pathway, it will comfort you when bowed down with sorrow, it will smooth your pillow on the bed of death, and add many a nectared drop to your cup of bliss hereafter.





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